

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:  
providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of  
item; and

for each entry,

(i) determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the  
associated item type,

(ii) making the entry available to the determined individual, and

(iii) receiving an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision  
on whether to approve the entry,

wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made  
available to the individual.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective  
purchasing entity, and wherein determining an individual with authority to approve the entry  
based on the associated item type includes:

determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity  
identified by the entry type; and

determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined  
association.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

for each entry,

(iv) determining a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;

(v) making the entry and indication available to the second individual; and

(vi) receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein the method further comprises:

making each entry included in the invoice available to a second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute of the entry.

5. A method for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

providing an invoice including a plurality of entries;

determining a value of the invoice; and

automatically approving all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

6. A method for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;

determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;

identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;

automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the determined value of each approved entry; and

making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver does not have the authority to approve.

7. The method of 6, further comprising:

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

10. A method for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items;

determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and

facilitating a review process for each item based on the determination, wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:

making information on each item available to the corresponding approver, wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding approver does not have the authority to approve; and

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding determined approver.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:

automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the invoice.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:

automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the item.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the review process includes:

receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or more items included in the invoice; and

making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the authority to approve.

15. A method for facilitating business transactions, comprising:  
receiving information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and  
directing individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

16. A method for facilitating business transactions, comprising:  
requesting access to invoice information associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;  
accessing the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and  
generating an indication reflecting a decision one whether to approve each authorized item.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and requesting access to the invoice information includes:  
requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein accessing the invoice information includes:

accessing the in-box.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and generating an indication includes:

generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

20. A method for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:  
receiving profile information associated with a user;  
receiving an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;

assigning an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within a providing entity that purchases items from a purchasing entity; and

assigning the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.

21. A method for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the method comprising:

receiving a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

requesting access to information associated with the invoice;

receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information; and

generating an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein requesting access to information includes:

generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

providing line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

24. The method of claim 21, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items; and

receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.

26. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

a providing entity for providing one or more invoices associated with one or more purchasing entities, wherein the one or more invoices each include one or more line items; and

a server for receiving the one or more invoices from the providing entity, determining an approver for each line item included in the one or more invoices, making available line item data associated with each one of the one or more line items to the approver(s), wherein each one of the approvers has viewing access restricted to line item data associated with line items that they authorized to review.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the server determines an approver for each line item included in the one or more invoices based on one or more approver hierarchies that associate approvers with sub-entities corresponding to the one or more purchasing entities.



28. The system of claim 27, wherein each of the one or more providing entities are associated with a separate approver hierarchy that indicates approvers that are associated with sub-entities within each respective providing entity.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the server consists of one or more servers.

30. The system of claim 26, wherein the server is configured to receive a request from each approver to access information associated with one or more line items that the approver is authorized to review, and makes available the information to the approver in response to the request.

31. A method for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items; and

determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item.

32. A computer-implemented method for facilitating dispute handling for invoices reflecting purchases of goods and services, comprising:

storing data representing an invoice with a plurality of line items;

permitting access to at least a portion of the data by an individual authorized to review a set of line items selected from the plurality of line items based on stored profile data associated with the individual; and

receiving decision data reflecting a decision by the authorized individual to dispute one of the selected line items.

33. The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein the stored profile data reflects the individual's authority to review the set of line items.

34. The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein the set of line items were reviewed by a second individual and the stored profile data reflects the individual's authority to review the set of line items.

35. The computer-implemented method of claim 32, further comprising:  
permitting access to the disputed selected line item by a second individual authorized to review the set of line items.

36. The computer-implemented method of claim 32, wherein permitting access includes:

excluding access to the portion of the data by a second individual authorized to review a second set of line items selected from the plurality of line items based on stored profile data associated with the second individual.

37. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, the method comprising:

providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item; and

for each entry,

(i) determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type,

(ii) making the entry available to the determined individual, and

(iii) receiving an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision on whether to approve the entry,

wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made available to the individual.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective purchasing entity, and wherein determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type includes:

determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity identified by the entry type; and

determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined association.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein the method further comprises:

for each entry,

(iv) determining a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;

(v) making the entry and indication available to the second individual; and

(vi) receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

40. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein the method further comprises:

making each entry included in the invoice available to a second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute of the entry.

41. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, the method comprising:

providing an invoice including a plurality of entries;

determining a value of the invoice; and

automatically approving all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

42. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

- providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;
- determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;
- identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;
- automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the determined value of each approved entry; and
- making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver does not have the authority to approve.

43. The computer-readable medium of 42, wherein the method further comprises:

- receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

44. The computer-readable medium of claim 42, wherein automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

- automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

45. The computer-readable medium of claim 42, wherein making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

46. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items;

determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and

facilitating a review process for each item based on the determination, wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

47. The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes: making information on each item available to the corresponding approver, wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding approver does not have the authority to approve; and

receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding determined approver.

48. The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:  
automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the  
invoice.

49. The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:  
automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the item.

50. The computer-readable medium of claim 46, wherein the review process includes:  
receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or more  
items included in the invoice; and

making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or  
more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the  
authority to approve.

51. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method,  
when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions, the method comprising:  
receiving information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and  
directing individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver  
receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

52. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method,  
when executed by a processor, for facilitating business transactions, comprising:

requesting access to invoice information associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;

accessing the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and

generating an indication reflecting a decision one whether to approve each authorized item.

53. The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and requesting access to the invoice information includes:

requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

54. The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein accessing the invoice information includes:

accessing the in-box.

55. The computer-readable medium of claim 52, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and generating an indication includes:

generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

56. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:



receiving profile information associated with a user;

receiving an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;

assigning an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within a providing entity that purchases items from a purchasing entity; and

assigning the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.

57. A computer-readable medium including instructions for performing a method, when executed by a processor, for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the method comprising:

receiving a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

requesting access to information associated with the invoice;

receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information; and

generating an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

58. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who

are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein requesting access to information includes:

generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

59. The computer-readable medium of claim 58, wherein receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

providing line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

60. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

61. The computer-readable medium of claim 57, wherein performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items; and

receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.

62. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:  
means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;  
means for determining, for each entry, an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;  
means for making each entry available to the determined individual; and  
means for receiving, for each entry, an indication from the determined individual reflecting a decision on whether to approve the entry,  
wherein entries that the individual does not have authority to approve are not made available to the individual.

63. The system of claim 62, wherein each associated item type identifies a respective purchasing entity, and wherein the means for determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type includes:

means for determining an association between an individual and a respective purchasing entity identified by the entry type; and  
means for determining an individual with authority to approve the entry based on the determined association.

64. The system of claim 62, further comprising:  
means for determining, for each entry, a second individual with authority to approve the decision reflected by the received indication;  
means for making each entry and indication available to the second individual; and

means for receiving a second indication from the second individual reflecting a second decision concerning the entry.

65. The system of claim 62, wherein a second individual is authorized to approve each entry included in the invoice, and wherein the system further comprises:

means for making each entry included in the invoice available to a second individual for further approval after receipt of an indication reflecting an approval or dispute of the entry.

66. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries;

means for determining a value of the invoice; and

means for automatically approving all of the entries included in the invoice based on the determined value.

67. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for providing an invoice including a plurality of entries, each entry associated with a type of item;

means for determining a value of each entry included in the invoice;

means for identifying for each entry an approver with authority to approve the entry based on the associated item type;

means for automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the determined value of each approved entry; and

means for making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value, wherein each entry that is made available excludes entries that the corresponding authorized approver does not have the authority to approve.

68. The system of 67, further comprising:

means for receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve each entry that the corresponding approver has the authority to approve.

69. The system of claim 68, wherein the means for automatically approving one or more entries included in the invoice based on the approved entries' determined value includes:

means for automatically approving each entry included in the invoice that has a determined value below a predetermined value.

70. The system of claim 67, wherein the means for making one or more entries available to a corresponding approver based on the available one or more entries' determined value includes:

means for making each entry that has a determined value above a predetermined value available to a corresponding authorized approver.

71. A system for facilitating business transactions between a providing entity and a purchasing entity, comprising:

means for providing, by the providing entity, an invoice including a plurality of items;

means for determining, for each item included in the invoice, a corresponding approver with authority to approve the item; and

means for facilitating a review process for each item based on the determination, wherein the review process is defined by the purchasing entity.

72. The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for making information on each item available to the corresponding approver, wherein each item that is made available excludes items that the corresponding approver does not have the authority to approve; and

means for receiving an indication from each corresponding approver reflecting a decision on whether to approve items that have been made available to the corresponding determined approver.

73. The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the invoice.

74. The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for automatically approving each item included in the invoice based on a value of the item.

75. The system of claim 71, wherein the means for facilitating a review process includes:

means for receiving an indication of a delegated approver with authority to approve one or more items included in the invoice; and

means for making the one or more items available to the delegated approver, wherein the one or more items that are made available excludes items that the delegated approver does not have the authority to approve.

76. A system for facilitating business transactions, comprising:

means for receiving information reflecting an invoice with a plurality of items; and

means for directing individual items to respective approvers such that each respective approver receives only items that the respective approver is authorized to review.

77. A system for facilitating business transactions, comprising:

means for requesting access to invoice information associated with an invoice including a plurality of items;

means for accessing the invoice information that includes information on only items included in the invoice that are authorized for review; and

means for generating an indication reflecting a decision one whether to approve each authorized item.

78. The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and the means for requesting access to the invoice information includes:

means for requesting access to the in-box in response to an indication of the availability of the invoice information reflected in the in-box.

79. The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and wherein the means for accessing the invoice information includes:

means for accessing the in-box.

80. The system of claim 77, wherein the invoice information is reflected in an in-box, and the means for generating an indication includes:

means for generating the indication by receiving selections on whether to approve each authorized item reflected in the in-box.

81. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions, comprising:

means for receiving profile information associated with a user;

means for receiving an indication reflecting the assignment of the user's approver status based on the profile information;

means for assigning an entity identifier to the user based on the approver status, wherein the identifier indicates an entity within a providing entity that purchases items from a purchasing entity; and

means for assigning the user as an approver with the authority to approve the purchases reflected in entries included in an invoice provided by the providing entity.



82. A system for facilitating electronic business transactions in a system including a purchasing entity that includes one or more sub-entities, and a providing entity, the system comprising:

means for receiving a notification that an invoice including one or more line items has been provided by the providing entity;

means for requesting access to information associated with the invoice;

means for receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items included in the invoice;

means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information; and

means for generating an indication reflecting results of the dispute/approval process.

83. The means for of claim 82, wherein an approver is associated with each sub-entity of the purchasing entity, and the notification is directed to approvers who are associated with sub-entities that are indicated in line items included in the invoice, and wherein the means for requesting access to information includes:

means for generating, by each approver that has received a notification, a request to access information associated with the invoice.

84. The system of claim 83, wherein the means for receiving line item information associated with selected line items of the one or more line items includes:

means for providing line item information to respective approvers based on the authority of the respective approvers to approve the selected line items included in the invoice, wherein

each respective approver is not presented with line item information associated with line items the respective approver is not authorized to approve.

85. The system of claim 82, wherein the means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

means for receiving an indication reflecting a dispute or approval of each selected line item.

86. The system of claim 82, wherein the means for performing a dispute/approval process on the line item information includes:

means for receiving an indication reflecting a dispute of a set of the selected line items;  
and

means for receiving a second indication reflecting an approval of a second set of the selected line items.